

Strasbourg, 3 March 2026

EPAS(2026)9

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)

## **International Women's Day Event**

### **Breakfast Roundtable on women and girls' participation in sport**

Friday, 6 March 2026

9.30 am - 12.00 noon

Hybrid meeting:  
online on the Kudo platform  
and  
Palais de l'Europe, meeting room No. 8  
Strasbourg, France

**Concept note and draft programme**

## Background

Gender equality has been one of the central themes of the Council of Europe's work in the field of sport for over a decade. In 2015, the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) was instrumental in the preparation of Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2015\)2](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender mainstreaming in sport. The Council of Europe has been promoting a number of initiatives, seeking to contribute to improving gender equality in sport, and these efforts are firmly enshrined in the Council of Europe's revised [European Sports Charter](#) (ESC).

From March 2018 to October 2019, the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (CoE) ran the "[ALL IN: Towards gender balance in sport](#)" joint project aiming to provide support to public authorities and sport organisations in the development and implementation of policies and programmes addressing gender inequalities in sport as well as in adoption of a gender mainstreaming strategy. As part of the project, EPAS assessed the state of play regarding gender equality in 17 countries across 6 indicators in the following areas: leadership, coaching, participation (from grassroots to elite sport), gender-based violence, media/communication and gender mainstreaming, subsequently producing a best practice [toolkit](#) for gender equality in sport and setting up an [online library](#) amongst other outcomes.

From March 2023 to March 2025, the Council of Europe's Sport Division advanced on this crucial work through the joint EU–CoE project "[All In Plus: promoting greater gender equality in sport](#)". To further enhance the findings of the first data collection campaign, the project fine-tuned the data indicators, adding officiating to the coaching indicator, and expanded the list of participating countries to 21. *All In Plus* placed a specific focus on issues linked to the representation of women in sport, collating data relating to women's participation in sports across a range of European jurisdictions and across a range of sports as well as providing key insights into actions promoting gender equality in sport. *All In Plus* research relating to gender equality in sports participation found that just over one third (35%) of all under 18 members in sports clubs and federations were girls, and less than one third (27%) of all over 18 members were women. Moreover, among elite athletes in the 21 jurisdictions, just over a third were women. Among different sports, those with the highest proportion of girls ranged from 40% to 66%, whereas those with the lowest proportion ranged from 2% to 6%. Among women, the highest proportions drastically reduced, ranging from 25% to 40%, whereas the lowest proportions ranged from 3% to 8%. All of the project findings and deliverables including 21 factsheets, the analytical report including a series of recommendations, the online library of best practice examples, videos and much more can be accessed [here](#).

In December 2025, EPAS finalised its Strategy 2026-2027, with gender equality and sport remaining a key tenet of the first Strategic Objective: 'Envisioning sport which is accessible for all'. EPAS will achieve this strategic goal in the field of gender equality and sport by following up on the Recommendations arising from the *All In Plus* EU–CoE joint project, organising the annual Breakfast Roundtables on International Women's Day, supporting the Governing Board and Consultative Committee Gender Equality Rapporteurs' work, working on transversal gender mainstreaming with the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Division, and finally collaborating with bodies working in these areas, in particular the International Working Group on Women & Sport, UNESCO, and the Global Observatory on Gender Equality and Sport. The entire EPAS Strategy 2026-2027 can be found [here](#).

It is in this context that the Council of Europe's Sport Division is delighted to announce the upcoming "Breakfast Roundtable on women and girl's participation in sport" on the occasion of International Women's Day (March 8).

During the first part of the event, international experts and guests will deliver presentations providing key insights and research into the issue of women and girls' participation in sport, in particular the removal of barriers to access. The second part will focus on initiatives that have been put in place to ensure equal participation for women and girls in sport, providing best practice examples for sports associations and member states. The third and final part will be a panel discussion on how to improve access to sport for women and girls.



## Draft Programme

- 9.30-9.40am**      **Introductory words**
- Hanne Juncker*, Director, Directorate of Security, Integrity and Rule of Law, Council of Europe
- Charlotte Girard-Fabre*, Chair, EPAS Consultative Committee
- 9.40-10.10am**      **Part one – Data on participation of women and girls in sport and why the high dropout rates?**
- Marie Denitton*, Gender Equality Rapporteur, EPAS Consultative Committee; Office Director, ENGSO
- Lombe Mwambwa*, CEO, Global Observatory for Gender Equality & Sport
- Sarah Bellew*, Head of Communications & Engagement, Women in Sport UK
- 10.10-10.45am**      **Part two – Best practices on promoting women and girl’s participation in sport**
- Nadia Bonjour*, Founder, NB Communication; Gender equality advocate in sport - “From Sparkle to Sport”
- Caroline Henry*, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Sports, CANAL+ – “Framing the narrative – prioritising editorial lines”
- Päivi Tolppanen*, Vice-President, Finnish Paralympic Committee; Para judo coach “Inclusive environments – retaining women and girls with disabilities”
- 10.45-11.00am**      **Coffee break**
- 11.00-11.50am**      **Part three – Panel discussion on how to increase the participation of girls and women in sport:**
- Moderated by Francine Hetherington Raveney, Deputy Executive Secretary, EPAS*
- Conny Kreuter*, Professional dancer and international champion, Austria
- Jane Dennehy*, Research and Advisory Director, The Gender Hub
- Bárbara Butragueño*, Assistant Director-General, Women and Sport, Spain
- Evert Verhagen*, Senior Expert, Health and Performance, UEFA
- Luca De Simoni*, EU Project Manager, National Amateur League of the Italian Football Federation, Italy

**11.50-12.00pm**

**Closing words**

*Stanislas Frossard*, Executive Secretary, EPAS

*Caterina Bolognese*, Head, Gender Equality Division, Directorate of Equal Rights and Dignity

*Charlotte Girard-Fabre*, Chair, EPAS Consultative Committee